



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Sixteenth Congress
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. **5443**



Introduced by HON. SITI DJALIA A. TURABIN-HATAMAN of Anak Mindanao
(AMIN) Party-List

EXPLANATORY NOTE

AN ACT DECLARING THE FIRST DAY OF FEBRUARY OF EVERY YEAR AS NATIONAL HIJAB DAY

The very first observance of the World Hijab Day (WHD) was on February 1, 2013. Founded by Ms. Nazma Khan in 2013 the idea being is to foster social awareness about why they wear hijab and wipe the stigmas attached to wearing the hijab. WHD has become an annual event encouraging Muslim and Non-Muslim women to wear the hijab and experience the life of a Hijabi Woman for a day.

There are several misconceptions of women wearing hijab. There are those who think that these women are being forced, oppressed and worst they are being labeled as "Terrorists". In various countries, like France, Muslim Women were banned from wearing hijab in public places thus violating their rights to practice their religion.

Hijabi women have been facing several challenges across the globe.

There are reports that our Muslim Hijabis experienced cruelty and oppression. For example in the United States after the 9/11 attack, there were Muslim women who were victims of ill-treatment and robbery. Discrimination and maltreatment of our hijabi all around the world continue because people fail to understand the reason for wearing the hijab.

In the Philippines there are some universities who banned Muslim students from wearing hijab. Some of these students are forced to remove their hijab to comply with the school's rules and regulations. Some are forced to drop out and transfer to other institutions. These are clear violations of the student's freedom of religion.

The wearing of hijab is every Muslim Woman's right. It is not just a piece of cloth but it is said to be their way of life. It has been explained in the Muslim holy book the *Qur'an* that it is obligatory upon every Muslim woman to guard their chastity and modesty.

The 1987 Philippine Constitution declares, *"No law shall be made respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. The free exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship, without discrimination or preference, shall forever be allowed. No religious test shall be required for the exercise of civil or political rights."* (Art.III, Sec.5)

It is our aim to raise awareness and to put a stop to all sorts of discriminations, including discrimination against Muslim Women. We hope to foster deeper respect and understanding among and between Filipinos of varying cultures and faith toward national unity and peace.

Therefore, the immediate passage of this bill is highly sought.


SITTI DJALIA A. TURABIN-HATAMAN



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**AN ACT DECLARING THE FIRST DAY OF FEBRUARY OF EVERY YEAR AS
NATIONAL HIJAB DAY**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

Section 1. National Hijab Day. The first day of February of every year is hereby declared as the "National Hijab Day."

Section 2. Declaration of Policy. The State recognizes the role of Women in nation-building, and shall ensure the fundamental equality before the law of women and men. The free exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship, without discrimination and or preference, shall be forever allowed.

Section 3. Definition of Terms. For purposes of this Act, "*hijab*" is a veil that covers the head and chest, which is particularly worn by a Muslim female beyond the age of puberty in the presence of adult males outside of their immediate family. It can further refer to any head, face, or body covering worn by Muslim women that conforms to a certain standard of modesty.

Hijabi is the term referring to a Muslim Woman wearing the hijab.

Section 4. Objectives.

- a.) To encourage Muslim and Non-Muslim women to wear the hijab for a day and experience the life of wearing it.
- b.) To remove the misconceptions of wearing hijab that has been misunderstood as symbol of oppression, terrorism and lack of freedom.
- c.) To stop discrimination against our Muslim Women "hijabi".
- d.) To protect the freedom of religion and the right to practice their religion of our Muslim Women.
- e.) To promote and deepen understanding amongst non-Muslims about the value of wearing hijab as an act of modesty and dignity to Muslim women
- f) Promote appreciation for diversity in expression of oneself and one's faith and religion.
- g) Promote tolerance and acceptance of other lifestyles amongst the Filipino Nation.

Section 5. Awareness Program. It shall be a day to showcase our Muslim Women Hijabis' rights. Muslim and Non-Muslim women alike are encouraged to don the hijab for one day. Government institutions, private sectors and schools are encouraged to commemorate this event in a manner that promotes understanding and awareness among its employees and students as to the objective of the campaign.

Section 6. Implementing Agency. The National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (NCMF) is hereby mandated as the lead agency in promotion and raising consciousness about Hijabis in the Philippines. It shall conduct activities that aim to deepen understanding of the hijab as a lifestyle choice amongst Muslim women. Towards this end, it may conduct fora, information dissemination campaign and other educational drive to effectively meet the objectives of this Act.

Section 5. Effectivity Clause.

This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in one newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,